1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

sending of children to stay with relatives or friends. The Ovimbundu consider it definitely an educational device. From the age of six or seven years children are sent singly or in pairs to spend as much as one or two years in the home of the mother's brother. If conditions are favourable they may also be sent to stay with the father's sister or brother, and girls (other than the first-born) may be sent to the mother's mother. Formerly, prominent families arranged for their sons to stay in the king's capital. These periods spent away from home may continue well into adolescence. Not only relatives but also friends, blood-brothers, and *vakuacisoko* (members of a certain communal order)[1] exchange children for certain periods in this way. This custom is by no means dead. It is now being carried on even within the Christian community. Its educational purpose is obvious.

Later Childhood

(From about nine years until puberty)

There is no definite time which marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two periods. The chief criterion is one of physical development for as soon as the child is physically able, he will begin to assume a definite role in the work of the adult community. This rarely comes before nine years of age and may be somewhat delayed. Soon after a child gets the permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V (∧) is chipped between the two upper front incisors.[2] This is a sort of national mark which many people omit to give their children at present. The line of observance is not sharply drawn as between Christians and non-Christians, as with the Herero.[3]

Formerly, the beginning of the period was well marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan. Most of the present older generation have had this experience and nearly every man of the present middle-aged generation as well. Nowadays the boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, he may begin to learn a trade, or he may be sent to school. Few Ovimbundu put their children in school before this age, and they evidently do not believe that younger children would profit by the instruction

[1] See *infra*, p. 114 f.
[2] See Hambly, op. cit., Plates XLIX and LIV.
[3] Vedder in Hahn *et al.*, op. cit., p. 177 f.

v. Two significant tones on radicals; no tonal alternance on nominal suffixes. In this Umbundu resembles the Lunda-Luena languages."(1)

Childs(2) classifies Umbundu with the Ambo-Herero group as belonging to the Western Province of Southern Bantu. He suggests(3) that the similarity of Umbundu to the Ngangela languages is due to the dominating influence of the Umbundu spoken in Viye (where the racial stock had a greater Ngangela element) over that spoken in other regions. This dominating influence may be explained by the relatively large number of missions in the Viye region, and presumably also by the activities of Viye traders.(4)

Dialectal differences in Umbundu speech are very small. There are certain noticeable differences between "up-country" and "down-country", roughly divided by the Keve and Kunene rivers. Each of the outlying regions has its own peculiarities, often due to foreign influences.(5)

It has been mentioned above that while the homeland of the Ovimbundu is in the Benguella Highland, the use of the Umbundu language is now more widespread. The Nganda and the Hanya tribes are increasingly using it, and the mixed populations of the coastal towns of Lobito, Katumbela and Benguella use it almost exclusively. It is also spoken in Nova Redondo, in Mossamedes, and along the Benguella Railway. This process of "Umbundu-ization" does not seem however to be taking place in Cipala, Sela; or Musende, in spite of the long period during which they owned the king of Bailundu as their overlord.(6)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS

Among the Ovimbundu two main physical types are distinguished by some writers:(7) one is of brown skin colour and slender build, the other a shorter, darker type with more facial hair. No correlation of these types with chiefly families on the one hand and commoners on the other has been recorded. Hambly(8) gives several good illustrations of physical types among the Ovimbundu, and contrasts them with those found among neighbouring tribes.

The Ovimbundu retain distinctive styles of dress, ornament, tooth mutilation (a V-shaped notch in the upper incisors), scarification and hair-dressing. Women are dressed in trade cloth: unmarried girls wear one piece of cloth which hangs from the armpits to the knees, while a married woman drapes herself with two pieces of cloth, a skirt hanging from her girdle, and an upper piece so folded as to hold her baby tightly on her back. Certain cloth designs are considered appropriate for girls, others only for older women. Men now dress usually in European fashion.

(1) This linguistic note has been written by C.M.N. White.
(2) Op.cit., p.169. (3) p.190, fn.2.
(4) See above, pp.8-9.
(5) Childs op.cit., p.190, fn.2. See also Kalukembe, p.7 above.
(6) Childs, op.cit., pp.11, 179-80.
(7) See Hambly 1934, p.128; Cushman 1944, p.36.
(8) Op.cit., plates XLIX-LIV.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

175 [316] [305] Serpa Pinto saw shafts for the working of iron ore in the neighborhood of Cubango. The ore was mixed with charcoal and smelted in shallow pits. It is stated that the iron was sometimes tempered with ox-grease and salt. The bellows are of the type made at Elende (I, p. 128). Of the tempering process I have no confirmation.

175 787 [764] Somewhere near Bihé Serpa Pinto saw the ceremony of questioning a corpse which was made to sway to and fro, the people believing all the while that it does so without human intervention. The diviner declared that the soul of a dead person will tell who caused the death (I, p. 130). I observed and photographed this ceremony (Plate XLV, Fig. 1).

[695] The ordeal of the poison cup is described; blood-letting, and divination by shaking articles in a basket are also mentioned. Pinto says that in the articles that appear uppermost the diviner reads what his hearers are desirous of learning of the past, present, or future. Sorcery and rain-making are likewise briefly mentioned (I, p. 132). The divination basket, the poison ordeal, and rain-making, are Umbundu cultural traits today.

171 224 Here Pinto illustrates the existing practice of mounting the skulls of animals killed by a hunter on a pole in the village. There is a further reference to this custom among the Ambuellas (I, p. 333). These instances, combined with those personally noted, give a wide distribution for the practice (I, p. 177).

175 [304] Pinto saw the operation of tooth mutilation among the Luimba. The operation was performed with a knife which was struck by repeated light blows (I, p. 209).

[711] Pinto illustrates arrowheads in use in 1879 (I, pp. 277, 346). These are exactly the same as those made and used in 1929 (Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9).

[412] Axes used by the Luchazi are sketched with a detail that shows the old forms to persist without alteration (II, p. 36).

[321] Water-pipes made from horns and gourds by the Luina of eastern Angola are of the forms now used in that region, also by the Ovimbundu of the present day (II, pp. 33, 37).

175 114 For use in checking and supplementing my observations Serpa Pinto's book was found to be of the greatest service, though the precise locality was sometimes difficult to identify. This explorer, in common with others, scattered his ethnological observations among descriptions of the route and botanical, zoological, and other notes.

Lux traveled from Loanda due east, following the Kwanza on the northern bank between 9° and 10° S. Lat., and so into Lunda.

IV. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

142 Among the Ovimbundu there are two main physical types. One of these is of brown skin color and slender build. In this type the calves and thighs are poorly developed, and the chest girth is slender in keeping with the general development. In general the physical 144 characteristics are distinctly different from those of a typical West African Negro as represented by the Kru and the Ibo tribes.

The Ovimbundu are Bantu Negroes who possibly result from a crossing of Hamites and true Negroes, a hypothesis which would account for both the light-colored slim type and the shorter, darker, more sturdy type. But E. Torday (Herbert Spencer, Descriptive [114] Sociology of African Races, London, 1930, Preface, p. iii) thinks that differences of physique among Sudanic and Bantu Negroes are sufficiently accounted for by isolations and environmental differences. Torday denies the need for postulating an infusion of Hamitic blood, but his opinion is opposed to that which has found general acceptance.

The darker Ovimbundu with more facial hair may represent an infusion of Vachokue blood because there was warfare between the Ovimbundu and the Vachokue of eastern Angola with the result that some of the latter were taken as slaves. Types of the Ovimbundu are shown (Plates LII–LIV).

101 The Vasele, an Umbundu-speaking people of west-central Angola, 142 form a linguistic and cultural pocket because of their isolation in rugged country. Their physique shows no pronounced differences [304] from that of the Ovimbundu, but the methods of scarification, tooth mutilation, and personal ornament are in distinct contrast with those of the Ovimbundu. The Ovimbundu have only a V-shaped notch in the two upper central incisors, whereas the Vasele chip all their teeth to points (Plate LXXVI, Figs. 1, 2).

[302] The Luvando of southwest Angola resemble the Ovimbundu in general physique, though the great difference in hairdressing and personal ornament is likely to give a contrary impression (Plate LIX, Figs. 1, 2).

The Vaheneca are particularly well developed (Plate LXII, Figs. 1, 2). Not until Mongua is reached does one find a people who are distinctly different from the Ovimbundu in all respects. The Vakuanyama of Mongua are noticeably tall and slim, much taller and slimmer than the Ovimbundu, while their physiognomy is more refined (Plates LXIII; LXVIII, Fig. 2). The Vakuanyama are a pastoral tribe whereas the Ovimbundu are principally agricultural.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The picture of types gathered at Ngalangi (Plate LXXXIX, Fig. 3) shows, reading from left to right along the back row, then along the front row in the same direction: an Ocimbundu; an Ocivokue; a man of the Vangangella; an Uluchazi woman; a Lunda man; and two types of the Vangangella.

The M'Bunda man and woman photographed at Cangamba display characteristic deformation of the upper central incisors (Plate XCI, Figs. 1, 2). Photographs of a Mussurongo man and two women, taken about a hundred miles east of Malange, show no great difference from the Ovimbundu except in their shorter stature (Plates LXX, Figs. 1, 2; LXXI, Figs. 1, 2). The Bushman (Plate LXIX, Figs. 1, 2) shows a type found wandering in small bands in the south of Angola. These photographs were taken at Cassanga.

The dress and personal ornaments of the tribes dwelling to the south of the Ovimbundu (Plates LIX–LXVIII) are entirely different from the clothing and decorative styles observed in the areas occupied by the Ovimbundu. This statement is true with regard to bodily covering, ornaments, tooth mutilation, use of pigment, scarification, and hairdressing.

In respect of all these factors, males and females of the Ovimbundu have distinctive patterns which do not appear to have influenced, or to have been influenced by the styles around them.

In working southward from Elende I passed through typical Umbundu cultures until the vicinity of Kipungo was reached. At this place the change in physical appearance, ornaments, and hairdressing was remarkable both for its abruptness and distinctiveness. But the change from agricultural to pastoral pursuits is gradual.

A comparison of photographs indicates at once the truth of this statement, which can be further illustrated by a detailed description of the ornaments observed from Kipungo to Mongua.

By far the most important of these is the circular *omba* shell made from the basal part of a gastropod shell of the genus *Conus* Linn; and allied forms. These are highly prized, not because of any intrinsic worth, but on account of strong sentiment arising from their bequest, which is usually in the female line. I have, however, seen a few males of the Valusanyama wearing these shells. For the old *omba* shells monetary offers equal to the earnings of a woman for a period of six months were made, but without success. One woman wavered somewhat, but finally decided that she dared not return to her home without her *omba* shells. From a Portuguese trader I bought, for a small sum, *omba* shells showing stages in manufacture.

3: Hambly E-S (1929-1933) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

302 [595] 171 A principal wife builds up her hair into five high cones. Vachokue women mass their hair into separate balls shaped and held by clay and red coloring matter. I know of no hairdressing for Vachokue men, but ornamental wooden combs are sometimes used.

304 In only one place have I seen a nose pin worn, namely, the Esele country of Vila Nova de Selles. The fashion is out of date, but women of only twenty-five years of age have the septum of the nose bored; evidently the custom has not been obsolete for a long period (Plate LXXV, Fig. 1).

177 439 301 The most popular European importations are blue cloth with white spots, metal hair combs, beads, and bright metal crosses bearing a figure of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus. This ornament has penetrated to districts far away from Christian missions, and its wide dispersal shows that a newly introduced and attractive ornament from a foreign source may readily be accepted by tribes of different cultures.

517 301 There are interesting points of psychology in the attitude of the Ovimbundu toward European importations. Only a few patterns of cloth are favored, and there is no sale for any other design. Some designs are thought to be appropriate for young girls while others are favored by older women. The same may be said of colored beads, for whereas both blue and white beads are the usual decoration for young women and immature girls, red beads are worn chiefly by the elderly women.

178 A consideration of personal ornament establishes the general truth that in scarification, hairdressing, tooth mutilation, the use of red powder and grease, the anointing of the hair with palm oil, and the wearing of trade cloth, leather, or bark cloth, there is little exchange of styles. There are diffusions in language and other cultural traits, but decorative elements which have for a long period been regarded as distinctive of tribal life are rigidly preserved.

R Hambly E-S (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

tribes, for everywhere these rites aim at securing ideas of unity, cooperation, conformity to tribal law, and admission to adult tribal life. 867 981

The methods used to achieve these aims are seclusion, circumcision, physical suffering, direct tuition, dancing, hunting, a change of name, and finally a ceremonial return to the tribe with adult status and the right to marry.

The following notes give details of ceremonies witnessed at three centers; namely, Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba. For comparison of these rites with others performed in eastern Angola reference should be made to the books of A. Schachtzabel, and to the papers of H. Baumann (III), and F. and W. Jaspert, whose observations were made independently of each other and of my own investigation. 114 171 981

The dances of the novices at Katoko, where there is a mixed population of Ovimbundu, Vangangella, and Vachokue tribes, are part of the final ceremonies following circumcision and seclusion. The social group formed by this collective circumcision, seclusion, and dancing, is called *ovisonji*, which is the name of the initiatory rites themselves. A boy who has been initiated is not allowed to become friendly with one who has not suffered the ceremony, and all boys who were circumcised at the same time preserve a sense of unity by dancing in a company and moving about together for twelve weeks after their return to the village from which they came. 981

Circumcision, which is prohibited by the Portuguese government, is still practised secretly in some regions. When circumcision is carried out by primitive methods serious infection may result from the lack of clean instruments, for the knife is, of course, unsterilized. 881 304

After the operation the patients are subjected to harsh treatment during the period of cure that follows. The circumcised are secluded in a wooded area. Food provided by the parents is placed on the bank of a river near which the initiation camp is built, and after the parents have gone away the boys bring their rations from the river to the camp. Before eating, the boys are obliged to give profuse thanks to the men who are acting as tutors. In some regions there is no food ration for the boys, and the rule is that each boy must subsist on what he is able to catch and collect with his hands.

Each boy has a male guardian who takes care of him after the operation. Those who have been operated upon are not permitted to wear clothes, nor are they allowed to warm themselves until quite healed. Any infraction of the rules results in a severe whipping.

3: Hambly E-8 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

mony at which the older initiates dance while the novices clap their hands.

I witnessed the dance of initiated boys at Ngongo, where the costumes resembled those I had seen at Katoko. At night a youth brought for me a set of initiation costumes (Plate LXXVIII, Fig. 1), which resembled those worn during the dance; this he did with great secrecy.

While at Ngalangi, the initiation of girls was investigated. After several days of negotiation with a village headman three female guardians of the girls came from the bush. The illustrations (Plate LXXVII, Figs. 1, 2) show the attitudes of these women and their decoration. There were three male drummers in the orchestra and several women, who sang and clapped their hands. On emerging from the bush the females moved toward the orchestra with their backs toward the players. As there were about two hundred yards to cover, this slow backward movement occupied a long time, since the three women did not take more than a few inches at each step. The dance itself was a slow, shuffling, swaying movement, made while the bodies of the performers remained inclined forward and their heads were bent so that it was almost impossible to see their faces. The women wore no clothing except loin cloths. Each female was plastered from head to foot with alternate bands of red and white clay smeared thickly. These three females are the women who act as instructors for the girls during isolation in the bush where they receive sexual and domestic instruction.

The seclusion of girls covers a period of one month. During this time the novices suffer no harsh treatment though an operation is performed, possibly excision of the clitoris, but I am not certain on this point. It was also stated that a corncob is introduced into the vagina. The tribe practising this ceremony for girls was the Vanyemba, living close to the Ovimbundu at Ngongo near Ngalangi in central Angola.

In order to corroborate further the two accounts of initiation ceremonies for boys I journeyed to Cangamba in Moxico, eastern Angola. The position of the two first centers visited (Katoko and Ngongo) is on the border line where Ovimbundu and Vachokwe mingle, and although there is a mixture of these and other tribes at Cangamba, the culture, language, and physique of the Vachokwe predominate. A description of the circumcision ceremonies witnessed at Cangamba is given below for comparison with the accounts resulting from visits to Katoko and Ngongo.

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The compound in which the initiates had been confined for three months was a circular enclosure made of light branches and leafy boughs, at the narrow embrasure of which stood a guardian of the boys, who permitted entrance. In the middle of the large enclosure were seven small cages, each of which was just large enough to allow one boy to lie on his back, and I was informed that the boys lie thus for two weeks after circumcision (Plate LXXX, Fig. 2).

The ages of the boys appeared to be from ten to seventeen years (Plate LXXX, Fig. 1), an observation which agrees well with that made at Katoko and Ngongo. The disparity of age among the novices at each center where initiation was observed bears out the statement that initiation ceremonies are held at irregular intervals, but not more frequently than once in four years.

During confinement in the large enclosure the novices had made masks and costumes (Plate LXXIX, Fig. 1), and when they were pulling on the coarse netting suits, which fit tightly, I observed that circumcision had been performed thoroughly, evidently some weeks ago, for the wounds were healed. Masks were obtained, and these the instructors of the boys were careful to wrap in bark cloth, at the same time requesting me not to show the objects to women.

A few days later these boys returned to their village to dance while wearing the costumes which had been made in the enclosure. At Cangamba the final ceremony lasted twelve hours amid great excitement, including ceaseless drumming and dancing. One boy, who wore a skirt on his fiber costume, lifted this to display an artificial penis of great size (Plate LXXIX, Fig. 2). This organ he grasped in his hand while chasing the women and girls, who ran away screaming and laughing.

At this ceremony there appeared stilt-walkers (Plate LXXXI, Fig. 1) and a medicine-man, a member of the Luchazi tribe (Plate LXXXI, Fig. 2).

Circumcision among the Bdjok (Vachokue) has been witnessed by C. P. Holdredge and described by Kimball Young (*Amer. Anthr.*, XXIX, pp. 661–669). This ceremony took place in the far northeast of Angola. The man described as the *mapiah* of whom women are afraid, but who is known to the initiates, corresponds to the Uluchazi medicine-man seen in the final ceremony at Cangamba. Of this grotesquely dressed person the men and boys took no notice, neither did he pay attention to them. On the contrary he chased women, who ran away screaming. Kimball Young's description of the enclosure where boys are confined, and his account of the

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

short fiber skirts worn within this enclosure by the novices, are in agreement with the observations made at Cangamba. There is also a close resemblance between the independent accounts of H. Baumann and F. and W. Jaspert for the Vachokue, also P. A. Delille and E. de Jonghe for the southwest Congo.

The question of initiation rites, past and present, among people of pure Umbundu culture is important. The matter is more fully dealt with later in discussing cultural contacts and cultural losses, but there are a few points which should not be omitted here.

At Caconda, an Umbundu center of western Angola, Père R. P. Laagel stated that only two years ago he had visited an initiation camp of Ovimbundu boys in the hope of persuading them to return to his mission school at Caconda. My informant stated that the boys were circumcised, beaten, and confined to an enclosure for several weeks. Those who cried out when flogged received a double portion of blows. Poisoning is the fate of a boy who reveals the secrets of the initiation camp to women or uninitiated boys. This is the most direct testimony I have received concerning initiation rites among unmixed Ovimbundu.

From Bailundu and Elende I have obtained slight evidence of initiation rites. At the former place, which, like Elende, is a center of the Ovimbundu tribe, fiber costumes were obtained. The mask from Elende is unlike those used at Cangamba, Katoko, and Ngongo. The fiber suits are, however, no different from costumes used at these places. Initiation ceremonies are not held at Elende today, and beyond Dr. Ennis's statement that circumcision rites have been revived in the past fifteen years of his long residence in the neighborhood of Elende, I have no evidence of ritual.

The data relating to initiation of boys in Angola suggest loss of the initiatory rites from Umbundu culture, until only a few old masks and costumes, along with attenuated ritual, remain sporadically. On the contrary, in eastern Angola and particularly among the Vachokue, who are farther than the Ovimbundu from coastal influence, initiation ceremonies flourish. At present there is occurring a penetration of initiation rites from the Vachokue area into east-central Angola, which is a region of cultural admixture.

The foregoing pages have described certain institutions and social forces which collectively bring individuals into conformity with tribal standards of conduct. The influences at work in this direction may be direct or indirect.

Field Museum of Natural History Anthropology, Vol. XXI, Plate XXIV

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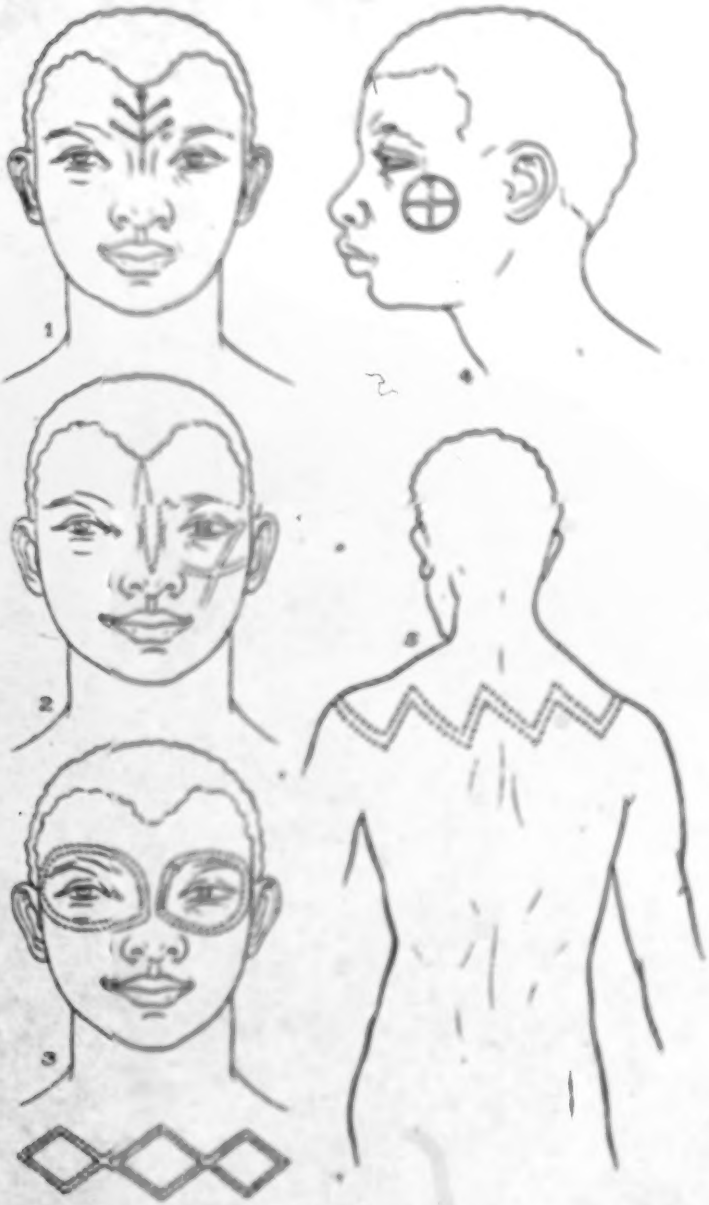

EXAMPLES OF SCARIFICATION

[p. 378]

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PHYSICAL TYPES, OVIMBUNDU, BLENDE

Fig. 1. Boys, showing tooth mutilation on left. Fig. 2. Girl with field basket

[304-P]

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[p.408]

TYPES OF OVIMBUNDU, BÜNDE

Fig. 1. Negro type, teeth sacrificed to tribal custom. Fig. 2. Modified Negro type

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[p.429]

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2

FEMALE TYPES OF VASELE, WEST-CENTRAL ANGOLA

Fig. 1. Wearing nose-pin and cowrie-shell head-band. Fig. 2. Wearing beaded head-band. Note scarification of forehead and cheeks

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[p. 442]

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2

VACHOKUE WOMEN, NGONGO, NGALANGI

Fig. 1. Showing mutilated teeth. Fig. 2. Showing scarification

[P. 445]

1 2

TYPES OF BABUNDA, CANGAMBA, SHOWING MUTILATED TEETH

Fig. 1. Woman. Fig. 2. Man

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